**Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church LC-MS**

Monthly Newsletter --- April 2021

699 Stambaugh Avenue, Sharon, PA 16146

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“THE ROCK and THE SWORD”

“Built upon the Rock of Christ and wielding the

Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.”

**From the Pastor:**

**A Sacrament for You**

Every Lutheran pastor I know and respect regularly puts before the congregation the Holy Sacraments of our Lord. What are Sacraments? The word “sacrament” doesn’t appear in the New Testament; the word is derived from the Ecclesiastical Latin “sacramentum,” and the Latin “sacer” (holy) and “sacro” (consecrated), which means holy or set apart. This was the Word given by the Church to which we could all call those things which Christ instituted that gave His grace (undeserved love in the forgiveness of sins applied directly to you). These are the concrete means to which every Christian can turn and know for certain that God has given them His love. We also call these the *Means of Grace*: Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Confession and Absolution.

Luther, in the Preface to the Small Catechism says, *“Lastly, since the tyranny of the Pope has been abolished, people are no longer willing to go to the Sacrament and despise it [as something useless and unnecessary]. Here again urging is necessary, however, with this understanding: We are to force no one to believe, or to receive the Sacrament, nor fix any law, nor time, nor place for it, but are to preach in such a manner that of their own accord, without our law, they will urge themselves and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer the Sacrament. This is done by telling them: Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel; for Christ did not say, This omit, or, This despise, but, This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, etc. Verily, He wants it done, and not entirely neglected and despised. This do ye, He says.”*

Under Papal Law you must go to confession and absolution once a year and you must also partake of the Sacrament, at the bare minimum, once a year. This, you see, is a matter of the law for them. I don’t want to go into all their doctrines on why this is “ok” in their minds. The takeaway for us Lutherans is this: If there are those among us who have not desired to be in the Divine Service and kneeling at the feet of Jesus for His Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins, there is something seriously concerning in that person’s life. It does no good to guilt or force someone into receiving the Lord’s Supper. Why? Because if there is not the desire to receive God’s grace, then they do not believe they need it for their sins. If there is not the desire for the forgiveness of sins, then they will not rightly discern the body and blood of Christ. And if that is the case, they will take the body and blood of Christ unto their judgement. No pastor wants that so he is to be careful and examine the faith of the individual before he administers the Lord’s Supper to them.

I am beginning to wonder how many children and families are going to be forever removed from the Church of God since I have now seen a persistent absence from Church though many were encouraged to return to the Mount Zion of our Lord. *“Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel.”* I cannot see into the hearts of man. The Lord knows the secret places of our heart; He will judge on the Last and Final day. But what I can see is what frightened Luther; that there are now more than has been before those who do not desire the Sacrament, just as they do not desire to believe and hear the Gospel.How many generations will have to suffer before they return to the Lord for His mercy and are repentant of their fear of death?

God did not save us from our fear of sin, death, and the devil for us to run into hiding and flee from His presence. There are people all over our country and world right now who left the Church because of Covid concerns and have not returned. They do not urge themselves, nor do they compel pastors to give them the Lord’s Supper, because they believe that they are better off without it. Their lives are governed, still even now, by fear of death. Because of fear, there was an overreaction amidst the congregations of believers.  In fact, one of the most troubling things I remember as I think back over the past year was people all around the world compelling pastors to not have the Lord’s Supper. Again, we read, “Christ did not say, This omit, or, This despise, but, This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, etc. Verily, He wants it done, and not entirely neglected and despised. This do ye, He says.”

Why aren't guilt about absence and hard pressing on people working to make them return back to the communion in the body of Christ? Because that is not why believers come to Church. Believers come because they are in need. We have been infiltrated by the enemy who has come in the night and sowed weeds among the good seed. There has entered into our teachings in the Church catholic, whether by fear or compulsion, a notion that has evolved into a practice that our needs are best met secluded in our homes, apart from one another, and distant from the communion of saints in the Sacrament of the Altar. We know that the Lord did not sow bad seeds in the preaching of His Word and the right division of Law and Gospel by His ministers. The enemy, the devil, has snatched the terror of sin from the conscience and replaced it with the terror of sickness and death.

Let me once again remind you, that the days that are numbered before Christ returns are perilous. These will not grow easier to bear, nor will our reasons for giving up meeting together grow shorter. The author of Hebrews writes, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25). We must be encouraging of one another that we shall live even though we die. To live is Christ and to die is gain, as the Apostle Paul writes. God has promised that He will not quench a flickering wick, but the flame which is dying will not grow brighter apart from Christ’s Church and her union in the Means of Grace. This is our moment to take charge and defend the Church which Christ purchased with His blood. This is our moment to seek out those who have been led astray by these false teachings and bring to their remembrance that Christ has overcome death and He gives us that victory through the blessed and most Holy Sacraments, in order that, our faith would be strengthened and our feet unwavering in the fight.

Especially, we must use such a time as this to teach about the death we die in Christ. “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Do not force or guilt your brother or sister in Christ into coming back to the Church for they will come for all the wrong reasons. Teach them again what they have lost because of fear. Gently instruct and encourage them back into the fold to once again receive the blessings from the Lord’s hands. He will not cast away those who turn to him in humility and repentance. The Lord is merciful and just, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Return to Him that he may lift you up out of the sorrows, fear, and worries of this present age.

In Christ Jesus,

~Pastor Deal

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**Thank You for Serving in April:**

**Assisting Elder:** TBD

**Altarware:** (Before service) Marie Flaughter & Diane Riefstahl; (After service) Evelyn Baisch & Joani Rice.

**Note:** Our greeting and ushering programs are temporarily suspended at this time.

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**REMINDER:** Please let the church office know of any changes to your address, phone, cell phone or your e-mail address!

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**We were chosen!** By directing designated Choice Dollars through Thrivent Choice, eligible Thrivent members choose where Thrivent Financial for Lutherans distributes some of its charitable outreach grant dollars among thousands of participating Lutheran nonprofit organizations and congregations.

 **Many thanks** to Thrivent Financial members **Arthur H. Baisch, Marie A. Flaugher, David L. Williams, and Betty A. Wolf** who recently directed Choice dollars to our church!

 We are also grateful to Thrivent for their generosity. Recently an error made on their part resulted in an additional $193.00 deposited into our account. Thrivent, recognizing the challenges facing congregations during the pandemic, has gifted that amount to us.

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**Homebound Members & Friends**

***Please keep the following people in your prayers:***

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Marion Roberts

287 East 2nd St. Apt. #103

Hummelstown, PA 17036

724-893-4570

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Martin Weisenborn

833 Adams Ave., NW

Warren, OH 44483

330-394-4355

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**** **LIKE & FOLLOW our Church’s Facebook page (Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church)!**

Remember to like, comment, and share to help us reach as many people as possible.

**April 11th is “Stock the Food Pantry Sunday”**

Your financial contributions to this outreach mission will be greatly appreciated!

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**Sts. Peter & Paul’s Food Pantry is able to assist those in need of emergency food!**

If you or someone you know is in need of emergency food during this time, please contact Barry Nelson (724-866-7417) or the church office (724-347-3620, option 3). Our food pantry operates through the Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County and distributes food the second and fourth Thursdays of each month beginning at 9 am.

 Please consider “lending a hand up” to those in need.

‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:40

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Please help us **RECYCLE!** A bin has been placed next to the parking lot doors for used bulletins. Please help us keep our sanctuary neat by either taking home your service bulletins or disposing of them here.

Additionally, there is a basket by the secretary’s office for donations of already-read Christian materials. These materials are shipped periodically to ICLD (International Christian Literature Distributors, Inc.) who, in turn, send them to Christians in third-world countries.

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**ATTENTION AUDITORS!** The next audit of deposits will be following worship Sunday, April 11th. If unable to attend, please phone Bev Chlpka at 724-962-4806.

**2021 THRIVENT POP**

**TAB CHALLENGE!**

The 2021 Thrivent Pop Tab Challenge is to officially begin soon! Keep bringing in your pop tabs and place them in the containers found in the narthex or main hallway. They may also be given to the church secretary.

 This project benefits the Ronald McDonald House.

 If you have any questions, feel free to contact Marie Flaugher at 724-301-8278.

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**CELEBRATING IN APRIL!**

**Birthdays**

Dillon Hamilton 4- 2

Patricia Parker 4- 3

Bill Nelson 4- 7

Jason Parkany 4- 10

Kim Revale 4- 13

Lillian Thurber 4- 21

Henrietta Holcroft 4- 24

\*If birthdays or anniversaries have been omitted, please let the church office know. Thank You!

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**Word of Hope: 1-888-217-8679**

The only 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL Hotline that is distinctly Lutheran, bringing healing found in Christ, to those whose hearts have been broken by abortion.

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FROM YOUR ALTAR GUILD:

-*Marie Flaugher*

***HAPPY EASTER!***

*Quiz*: How many times does the word Easter appear in the Bible?

*Answer*: NONE! Except in the King James Version when Herod was contemplating the fate of Peter. “And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” (Acts 12:4)

Easter is considered the high point of our church year. Christ died and rose from the dead! Our celebration lasts for 50 days during which we celebrate the Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost.

As Lutherans, we have come to associate several symbolic customs with the Easter season. Among these are the use of the color white, flowers, and the Paschal Candle.

* The color white is used to symbolize perfection, celebration, and joy. Our altar will be adorned in white for these fifty days.
* At no other time during the Church year, other than Christmas, is there such an abundant use of flowers in the church! I just love the smell of Easter lilies, tulips, and hyacinths on Easter Sunday! Flowers signify new life, and what better way to demonstrate this than with beautiful spring flowers?
* Finally, the Paschal Candle. When lit, it symbolizes Christ’s victory over darkness. It will be lit for each service throughout the Easter season.

Although the Easter season officially ends on Pentecost, we celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the dead all year long through the words we profess in the Nicene Creed: “was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again according to the scriptures and ascended into Heaven”.

These words are our comfort and assurance that we will have a Happy Easter every day!

**REMINDER:** Members of the **Finance Committee** are asked to review the **endowment fund booklet** prior to the next meeting. Speak with Jesse Riffle if you should have any questions.

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**Bible Memory Verses from March:**

**For Adults:**

March 7:  *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

 *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

March 14: *My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Proverbs 6:20; 23:22*

March 21:  *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.*

*Ephesians 4:26-27*

March 28: *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5*

**For Children:**

March 7:  *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28*

March 14: *Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

*John 12:24*

March 21: *Christ says: “For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” John 17:19*

March 28: *He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and…bore the sin of many.*

*Isaiah 53:12*

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**The Easter Lily**

Have you ever wondered how the “Easter lily” came to be named or how it became a symbol of Easter?

 Pure white in color with a trumpet-like shape, the Easter lily has often been referred to as “the white-robed apostle of hope”. It is even mentioned in the Bible a few times! One example was when Christ stated during his Sermon on the Mount, “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Luke 12:27)

 St. Bede, a 7th century Benedictine monk, wrote of the flower’s special form as a horn being blown to announce both Jesus’ resurrection and the start of spring.

On the first Easter, white lilies reputedly blossomed in the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ spent his final hours before his arrest and crucifixion.

To read further information about the history of the Easter lily and its proper care, check out the website <https://www.1800flowers.com/blog/celebrate-occasions/seasonal-trends/history-of-the-easter-lily>.

**llllllllllllllllllllllllllllIf entering the church during the week,** please let office staff know that you are in the building. Also, please make certain to turn off lights, lock doors, etc. upon leaving.

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Remember the

following in Prayer…

**~The Hurting and Healing:** *The friends and family of John Dyll, who passed away March 11th, Billy Napierkoski (friend of Diane Riefstahl), who passed away March 20th, and Audrey Tremble (Michael Corcoran’s fiancée), who passed away March 16th; also Lois BortnerCA, Richard Brandes, John Burdette, Kim, Susan Davies, Tim Dudash, Joseph Fleet, Marie Haenftling, Neale & Melissa Huston, Michelle KellyCA, Donna Kennedy, Jess Lavoie, Paul Lucas****CA****, Sandy Marshall, Ernie Meszaros, Mike Moats, Rhonda Moats, David Nelson, Catherine Pfrenger and family, Juanita Rentschler, Richard ReuningCA, Marty Scott, Dan Spanos, Angela WeserCA, Betty Wolf, and Millie Zachar.*

**~The Homebound:**  *Marion Roberts and Martin Weisenborn.*

**~Serving in the Military:**  *Curtis Sinewe and Joshua Solyan.*

**~Community & World Needs:**  *Those suffering from or affected by the coronavirus; those suffering from loss and dislocation because weather disasters; those suffering from addiction and their families; Local, State, and National Government Leaders; safety for all Police Officers, Firefighters, & First Responders; the unemployed; our Second Quarter Local Mission: Sts. Peter & Paul’s Community Day 2021.*

*\*CA represents cancer*

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*.***REMINDER:** If you would like someone’s name to be added to or deleted from our prayer list, please put a written note in the secretary’s mail slot by the office door.

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If you do not have an email account or do not receive emails from the church but wish to be notified of significant information concerning your fellow church members (such as births or deaths), please put a note in the Secretary’s mail slot asking to receive a phone call. Every attempt will be made to phone you within 24 hours of an email being sent out.

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**Sunday Morning Bible Study** is currently studying the Augsburg Confessions. This Bible Study is open to all ages.

 Bible Study begins at 8:45 am *prior* to the Divine Service.

 Please note that Bible Study will *not* be held Easter Sunday, April 4th.

If you should have a topic which you would like considered for Bible Study *or* are possibly interested in a midweek Bible Study, please speak with Pastor Deal.

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**SCRIP Program**

The SCRIP/Gift Card order form was recently updated to include additional requested retailers and the percentages rebated to the church for each card ordered. If you have other retailers that you would be interested in knowing if they participate in this program, please contact Matt Berent.

 SCRIP orders and payments are due the first Sunday of each month. Checks should be made out to Sts. Peter & Paul’s. You should receive your gift cards the following week.

 Profits from this fundraiser have been earmarked for the Fellowship Hall Picture Restoration/Reframing project.

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**Tre Ore (Three Hours)**

The Tre Ore or Three Hour Good Friday service will be held from noon to 3 pm April 2nd.

 This solemn service denotes the three agonizing hours during which Christ hanged on the cross. Also celebrated by some other Christian sects (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist), our Tre Ore service is broken into three parts: Matins, Divine Service (including the Lord’s Supper), and Vespers.

 There will be a brief break between each part of the service.

 Those who attend this service are asked to observe its solemnity and refrain from extraneous conversation while in the sanctuary.

 We are grateful to Rev. Baisch and Barry Nelson for assisting with this service.

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**Our Second Quarter Local Mission: Sts. Peter & Paul’s**

**Community Day 2021**

This year will mark our fourth annual Community Day celebration. Started in 2018, the purpose of Community Day is to provide a safe, family-based gathering of our friends and neighbors. Each year’s celebration has been a little different. Last year, due to the pandemic, an outdoor movie night was held which allowed attendees to remain socially-distanced all while enjoying a family-friendly movie.

 This year’s celebration will be held Saturday, July 17th. Tentative plans include for children: an afternoon, indoor movie, crafts, puppet show, competitions, and children’s musician. Adult activities will include bingo, basket raffles, and a possible band. There will be free food and beverages for all!

 If you would like to know how you can help out with this event, speak with Pastor Deal, Jesse Riffle, or Diane Riefstahl.

 Your attendance /assistance at this event will be greatly appreciated.

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**Stations of the Cross**

At our 6 pm Good Friday service, we will be commemorating Christ’s passion while observing the fourteen stations of the cross.

 Each station relates, through prayer, meditation, or a Biblical passage, Christ’s walk to Calvary and is accompanied by a related picture.

 Three of the stations are not mentioned in the Gospels, but have traditionally always been included. These are noted below with an (\*).

 The fourteen stations of the cross are as follows:

* Jesus is condemned to death
* Jesus takes up His cross
* Jesus falls
* Jesus meets His mother
* Simon of Cyrene carries the cross
* A woman shows mercy to Jesus\*
* Jesus falls a second time\*
* Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
* Jesus falls a third time\*
* Jesus is stripped of His garments
* Jesus is nailed to the cross
* Jesus dies on the cross
* Jesus is taken down from the cross
* Jesus is laid in the tomb

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**The Paschal Candle**

This year during our Saturday Vigil, our new Paschal Candle will be introduced. Our new Lilium candle stands four feet high and is made of 51% beeswax. The candle features a blue and gold fleur-de-lis, a gold leaf Alpha and Omega, and two bands with Chi-Rho and Lamb of God medallions.

To understand more about the history and use of the Paschal Candle, the following article was taken from the Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary (https://concordia-seminary.ca/2013/04/22/paschal-candle-donated/) .

A “Paschal Candle” could also be called an “Easter Candle”. The word “paschal” comes from “Passover [πάσχα]”, the great event of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt that reached a greater fulfilment when Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. Jesus is our paschal lamb (I Cor. 5:7).

When Christ died upon the cross on the first Good Friday, the world was plunged into darkness for three hours. He rose on Easter morning at first light. Candles have always symbolized the light that Christ brought into the world (Jn 1:9), but at Easter they particularly recall the light of His resurrection life.

Many churches strip the altar at the end of the service on Holy Thursday and hold their Good Friday services without paraments or candles on the altar. At the Saturday service, called the Easter Vigil, it was traditional to bring “new fire” to a candle in the darkness of that most holy night while waiting for the resurrection of Christ on Easter morn. This new candle was known as the Paschal Candle. Some medieval examples were monumental, celebrating Easter with great exuberance: a candle at Salisbury Cathedral was 12 metres tall, and one at Westminster Abbey weighed over 700 kg. It should, in any case, tower above all other candles in the church to highlight this central mystery of our faith.

The Paschal Candle is traditionally decorated with symbols to remind us of Christ: the Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13), the year of our Lord to remind us that our times are always in His hands (Heb. 13:8), and a cross with five nails to represent His death and wounds for us. The candle is lit for the Easter season, from the Vigil until Pentecost, to symbolize the resurrected life of Christ, and placed at the north end of the altar. Subsequently it is placed by the font and lit at each Baptism to remind us that in Baptism we die and rise with Christ. Finally, it is placed at the head of the casket and lit for funerals to remind us that our bodies will rise because of their unity with Christ.

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Sincere sympathy is extended to the friends and families of **John Dyll** who passed away March 11, 2021.

 John was a faithful, devoted member of this church. Although he will be sorely missed, we rejoice in his faith in our Lord.

May those who mourn his passing find comfort in the promise of eternal life with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

John’s obituary follows.

John N. Dyll, 92, of Sharon, passed away Thursday morning, March 11, 2021, in Sharon Regional Medical Center.

Mr. Dyll was born June 23, 1928, in Sharon, a son of John and Caroline (Smolenski) Dyll.

He was a 1946 graduate of Farrell High School, where he was an exceptional, three-sport athlete. In 1994, he was inducted into the Mercer County Sports Hall of Fame for his achievements as a varsity football, basketball and baseball player.

A veteran of the Army, John was stationed in Germany during the Korean War and achieved the rank of Sergeant prior to being honorably discharged.

For many years, he worked as a manager at Ace Lumber Co., Youngstown, Ohio, retiring as company Vice President.

John was a member of Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sharon, where he served as an Elder and oversaw the church food pantry.

In his younger years, he remained active in sports by coaching Sharon Little League. An avid golfer, John loved the game and continued playing into his early 90s, and now in heaven, he will birdie every hole.

He was a lifelong and oldest living member of the Slovenian Athletic Club, Sharon, where he actively volunteered at annual fundraisers to provide local students with scholarships.

His faith and family were the cornerstone of his long life, but it was the love he had for his grandchildren that kept him young.

His beloved wife of 56 years, Susan (Tomko) Dyll, whom he married April 25, 1953, preceded him in death Oct. 16, 2009.

John is survived by a daughter, Lynne (Mark) Spanos, Sharon; a son, Mark (Penny Smith) Dyll, Lewis Center, Ohio; four grandchildren, Nicholas and Daniel Spanos, and Mackenzie and Madison Dyll.

In addition to his wife and parents, John was preceded in death by an infant son, Rick Allen Dyll; five brothers, Victor, Stanley, Felix, Cashmere and Edward Dyll; and five sisters, Laura Dyll, Josephine Russell, Martha Whitehead, Florence Loosemore and Caroline Stigliano.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, 699 Stambaugh Ave., Sharon, PA 16146.

Interment: America's Cemetery, Hermitage.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to J. BRADLEY McGONIGLE FUNERAL HOME and CREMATORY, Inc., 1090 E. State St., Sharon.

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**A note from Pastor Deal:** *Please let me know if you or a loved one are in the hospital or have a special need. Also, please ask the hospital or family members to phone me or the church office as I wish to visit those who may be hurting.*

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